

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1 and 5 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed (see, e.g., specification at page 12, second paragraph to page 13, first paragraph; page 27, third paragraph to page 28, first paragraph; page 36, second paragraph; and page 38, line 1 to page 39, last line).

As amended, independent claim 1 recites an image processing device in which a directing means directs suspension of an invalidation of image data stored in an image data storing means "while the invalidation is being performed," and a permitting means permits suspension of the invalidation being performed "after a predetermined code is inputted by a user, the predetermined code being matched with a code administrated in the image processing device to confirm that the user who requested the suspension of the invalidation is a certified user, and the permitting means then suspends the invalidation being performed in all areas of the image data storing means," where the invalidation being performed cannot be suspended unless approved by the certified user by entry of the predetermined code. Independent claim 5 recites an image processing method including similar limitations.

For example, referring to page 36, second paragraph of the Applicants' specification, in order to suspend an invalidation being performed, a user must enter a predetermined key operator code known only to the user, the predetermined key operator code being matched with "the key operator code information administrated by the administration section 14" to confirm that the user is a certified operator/user, and thus is authorized to stop the deletion (invalidation) of image data. As described on page 36, second paragraph of the Applicants' specification, after the user is confirmed as a certified user, the deletion operation is suspended in "all data area of the hard disk 12."

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,285,459 to Koakutsu et al. ("Koakutsu") in view of Japanese Publication 09-284572 (referred

to as "Tokukaihei"), further in view of U.S. Patent 6,745,334 to Ikegami. Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, further in view of Ikegami, further in view of U.S. Patent 6,639,687 to Neilsen, further in view of "well known art." These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1 and 5 over the proposed combination of Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, further in view of Ikegami, the proposed combination does not teach or suggest an image processing device in which a directing means directs suspension of an invalidation of image data stored in an image data storing means "while the invalidation is being performed," and a permitting means permits suspension of the invalidation being performed "after a predetermined code is inputted by a user, the predetermined code being matched with a code administrated in the image processing device to confirm that the user who requested the suspension of the invalidation is a certified user, and the permitting means then suspends the invalidation being performed in all areas of the image data storing means," where the invalidation being performed cannot be suspended unless approved by the certified user by entry of the predetermined code, as recited in independent claim 1 (*see also* independent claim 5).

On page 2, last paragraph of the Office Action of 06/18/2009, it was alleged that the Tokukaihei reference discloses "suspension (stopping) of the invalidation (deletion) performed by the image data invalidating means."

On page 3, second paragraph of the Office Action of 06/18/2009, it was alleged that the Ikegami reference discloses permitting an invalidation "after a predetermined code (password) is inputted to confirm that a user who requested the invalidation (delete) is a certified user (authorized user)."

Further, on page 3, last paragraph to page 4, first paragraph of the Office Action of 06/18/2009, it was alleged that it would have been obvious to combine password entry, as taught by Ikegami, with the suspension of a deletion process, as taught by Tokukaihei, in order to provide added security to the deletion process.

However, the proposed combination of Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, further in view of Ikegami, does not teach or suggest that entry of a password is required for **suspension of an invalidation/deletion that is being performed**, such that "after a predetermined code is inputted by a user, the predetermined code being matched with a code administrated in the image processing device to confirm that the user who requested the suspension of the invalidation is a certified user, and the permitting means then suspends the invalidation being performed in all areas of the image data storing means," as claimed.

Referring to FIG. 4 of Tokukaihei, in step S402, it is judged whether "there is a request for stopping the deletion of the data" (see English-language translation of paragraph 0052 of Tokukaihei). If the judgment in step S402 results in Yes, the image data stored in the hard disk is not deleted, whereas if the judgment results in No, the next step is performed to judge whether or not the hard disk has an area to be deleted, where steps S402 to S404 are repeated until a request for stopping deletion is made, or until all areas are deleted (see paragraphs 0053-0055 of the English-language translation of Tokukaihei).

In other words, Tokukaihei does not require a person requesting suspension of a deletion to be a "certified user," and does not check a password or code prior to suspending the deletion.

In Ikegami, as discussed in the response filed on March 24, 2009, a password is registered in advance, so as to require password authentication before performing maintenance of a personal box assigned to an individual (e.g., deletion, change of name), so that unauthorized persons cannot perform the maintenance.

Therefore, in Ikegami, a password is registered in advance with regard to a particular personal box, and the password can be entered to delete the personal box. In other words, Ikegami merely discloses that entry of a password results in deletion of a particular personal box, not that entry of the password could somehow **suspend a deletion being performed**.

Further, the proposed combination of Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, further in view of Ikegami, does not teach or suggest that "after a predetermined code is inputted by a user, the predetermined code being matched with a code administrated in the image processing device to confirm that the user who requested the suspension of the invalidation is a certified user, and the permitting means then suspends the invalidation being performed in all areas of the image data storing means," as claimed.

In Ikegami, a password is set for each personal box. For example, as shown in FIG. 11 of Ikegami, a personal box is provided for each user. That is, the number of personal boxes corresponds to the number of users, which is equal to the number of passwords in Ikegami. Further, as described in column 11, line 9 to column 13, line 17 of Ikegami, a new password is registered when a new personal box is registered, and a password is deleted when the corresponding personal box is deleted.

Therefore, if Ikegami was somehow combined with the proposed combination of Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, a password must be set for each "personal box" (or image data). In accordance with the teachings of Ikegami, a password entered for each "personal box" would apply only to that "personal box" (or image data), and not to the entire hard disk of Tokukaihei.

In contrast, independent claims 1 and 5 recite that upon entry of a predetermined code that matches a code "administrated in the image processing device," an invalidation/deletion being performed is suspended in all areas of an image data storing means of the image processing device.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the proposed combination of Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, further in view of Ikegami, does not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, independent claims 1 and 5 and their respective dependent claims are patentable over the proposed combination.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

/Steven M. Jensen/

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Steven M. Jensen
(Reg. No. 42,693)
Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge
P.O. Box 55874
Boston, MA 02205

Phone: (617) 239-0100

Customer No. 21874